

# Congress of the United States

September 9, 2025

Cathy Engelbert  
Commissioner  
Women's National Basketball Association  
645 Fifth Avenue  
New York, New York 10022

Dear Commissioner Engelbert:

As Members of the Democratic Women's Caucus and House Democratic Caucus, we are deeply invested in the success and growth of women's sports. We write regarding the ongoing negotiations for a new collective bargaining agreement (CBA) between the Women's National Basketball Association (WNBA) and the players' union, the Women's National Basketball Players Association (WNBPA). Given that it is the policy of the United States to facilitate collective bargaining under the *National Labor Relations Act* (NLRA), we urge you to bargain in good faith to reach a fair CBA in a timely manner before the October 31 deadline.

It is our understanding that the WNBPA sent an initial proposal to the league in February and a follow-up in the spring, but WNBA leadership did not formally respond until June.<sup>1</sup> Following a meeting between players and the league in Indianapolis in July, players reported the meeting was a wasted opportunity with both parties remaining very far apart on even preliminary discussions.<sup>2</sup> As firm believers that women workers deserve to be properly compensated, we are concerned about the WNBA's delayed response, the differing accounts on the status of negotiations, and that the needs of players are not being fully addressed.

We understand the league presented a CBA proposal in July. However, reports suggest that this offer falls short of players' demands, especially regarding revenue sharing and salaries. WNBA players receive no shared revenue under the current CBA including from TV deals, tickets, sponsorships, and merchandise sales. This is drastic in comparison with other major professional sports leagues: National Basketball Association players receive 49 to 51%, National Football League players receive at least 48.8%, and National Hockey League players receive 50% of their respective shared revenues.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Pickman, B. (2025, July 24). *What to know about WNBA CBA negotiations: Revenue sharing, salary increases and scheduling*. The New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6512337/2025/07/24/wnba-cba-negotiations-revenue-share-salaries/>

<sup>2</sup>Pickman, B. (2025, July 19). *WNBA commissioner confident CBA will be signed by deadline despite player concerns*. The New York Times. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6504249/2025/07/19/wnba-cba-commissioner-confident-player-concerns/>

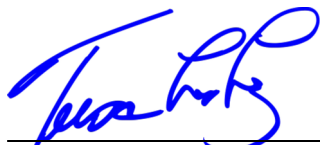
<sup>3</sup>Moorehead, M. (2025, August 5) *WNBA players demand: "Pay us what you owe us!"* Workers World. [https://www.workers.org/2025/08/87233/?utm\\_source=rss&utm\\_medium=rss&utm\\_campaign=wnba-players-demand-pay-us-what-you-owe-us](https://www.workers.org/2025/08/87233/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=wnba-players-demand-pay-us-what-you-owe-us)

These negotiations come at a pivotal time for the WNBA which has seen historic growth in recent years. From 2019 to 2023, the league's revenue increased from \$102 million to \$119 million. In 2024, the league experienced record merchandise sales and its most-watched regular season in history. This year, average attendance at games is at an all-time high<sup>4</sup> and expansion teams have been announced. In addition, a new television rights deal was signed for an estimated \$2.2 billion over 11 years, averaging \$200 million per season.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, the value of the current 13 franchises of the WNBA has increased by an average of 180% over the last year.<sup>6</sup> The gap between franchise profit and player pay is drastic. Players drive the league's success, yet owners walk away with most of the financial rewards. The WNBPA is seeking a new agreement that aligns player salaries with the league's growing financial success. We ask that you give the players' requests full and fair consideration.

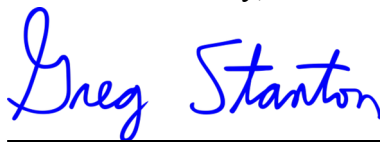
As leaders and advocates for women's sports and women workers, we also must acknowledge the historic nature of these negotiations. Women are under constant attack right now. The gender wage gap widened for the first time in 20 years.<sup>7</sup> Women are leaving the workforce rapidly.<sup>8</sup> This new CBA deal is an opportunity to set the record straight that women are valuable workers who deserve to be paid accordingly and treated fairly.

It is our belief that coming to a timely agreement will benefit both parties involved and will build upon the massive success of the league and these athletes. We will continue to follow these negotiations closely and appreciate your attention to this pressing matter.

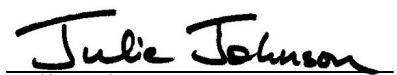
Sincerely,



Teresa Leger Fernández  
Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson  
Equality Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus

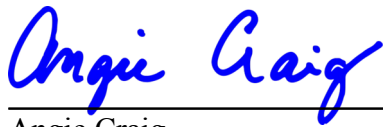
<sup>4</sup> Sullivan, B. (2025, July 19). *The WNBA's success last year wasn't a fluke. Now, the league and its players want to cash in.* NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2025/07/19/nx-s1-5471422/wnba-all-star-game-caitlyn-clark-indianapolis>

<sup>5</sup> Nadkarni, R. (2025, July 22). *Why WNBA players are telling the league: 'Pay us what you owe us.'* NBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.nbcnews.com/sports/wnba/wnba-players-are-telling-league-pay-us-owe-us-rcna219673>

<sup>6</sup> Morse, B. (2025, June 24). *Study says WNBA franchises increased in value by an average of 180% since last year, setting a record.* CNN. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2025/06/24/sport/wnba-franchise-increase-value-sportico-spt#:~:text=According%20to%20Sportico%2C%20the%20teams,team%20was%20worth%20in%202024.>

<sup>7</sup> National Partnership for Women & Families. (2025, March 24). *The gender wage gap widened for the first time in two decades, and Trump responds by rolling back protections that help workers discover discriminatory pay.* National Partnership for Women & Families. Retrieved from <https://nationalpartnership.org/gender-wage-gap-widened-first-time-in-two-decades-trump-responds-rolling-back-protections/>

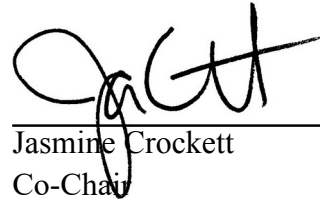
<sup>8</sup> Semuels, A. (2025, August 5). *Why so many women are quitting the workforce.* TIME. Retrieved from <https://time.com/7306896/women-leaving-workforce/>



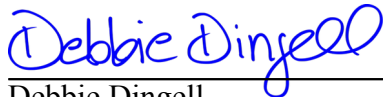
Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



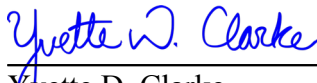
Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress




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Co-Chair  
Communications Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Debbie Dingell  
Senate Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Yvette D. Clarke  
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress




Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
New Member Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen  
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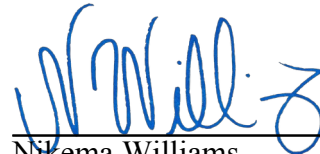
Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



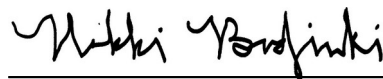
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Sydney Kamlager-Dove  
Co-Chair  
Policy Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nikema Williams  
Chief Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus



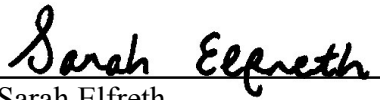
Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel  
Chair Emerita  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



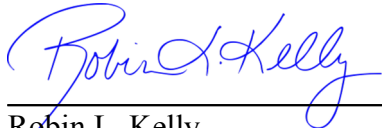
Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland  
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



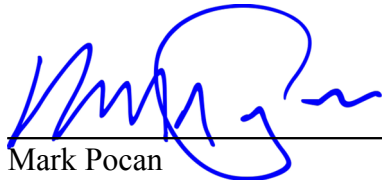
Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



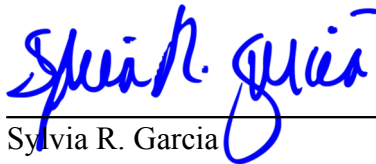
Joyce Beatty  
National Leaders & Advocacy  
Organization Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Maxine Dexter  
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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



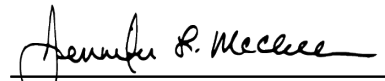
Jiji Tokuda  
Progressive Caucus Liaison  
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Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



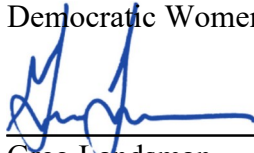
Shontel M. Brown  
Co-Chair  
Communications Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



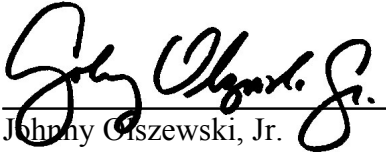
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Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



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Co-Chair  
Policy Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Johnny Oiszewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride  
Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus



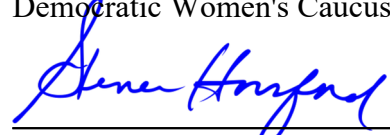
Ayanna Pressley  
Co-Chair & Liaison  
Reproductive Health Care Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Pramila Jayapal  
Congressional Asian Pacific  
American Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



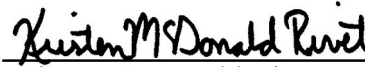
Emilia Strong Sykes  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



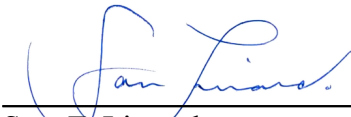
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Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet  
Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo  
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



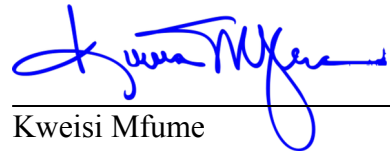
J. Luis Correa  
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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
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Emily Randall  
Whip  
Democratic Women's Caucus



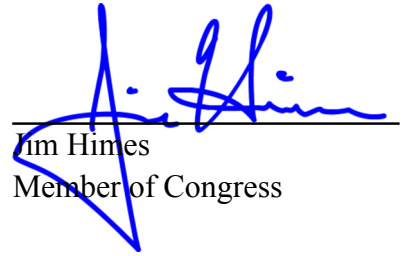
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



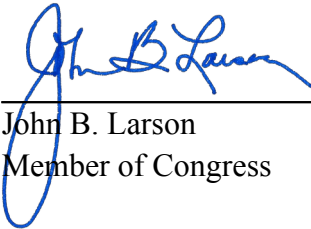
Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



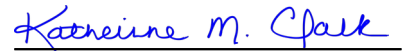
Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



John B. Larson  
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Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



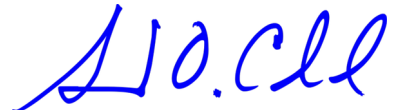
Katherine M. Clark  
Member of Congress




Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress



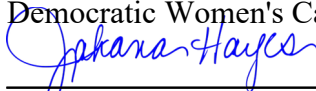
Kelly Morrison  
Co-Chair & Liaison  
Reproductive Health Care  
Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



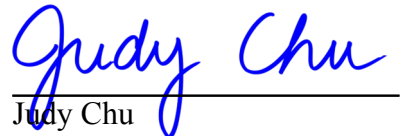
Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress



Frank J. Mrvan  
Member of Congress



Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Co-Chair & Liaison  
Reproductive Health Care  
Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



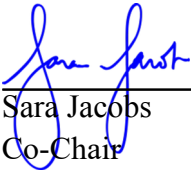
Andrea Salinas  
Congressional Hispanic  
Caucus Liaison  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Nancy Pelosi  
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

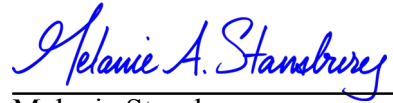


Sara Jacobs  
Co-Chair

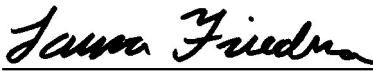
Member Services Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury  
Co-Chair  
Member Services Task Force  
Democratic Women's Caucus



Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



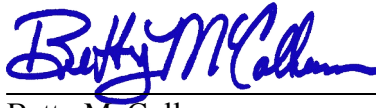
Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



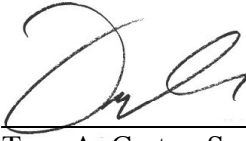
Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



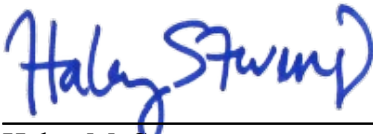
Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress



Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



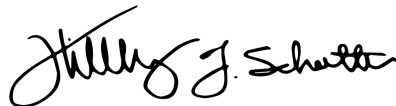
Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten  
Vice Chair  
Democratic Women's Caucus